

Please replace the paragraphs beginning on Page 14, line 7 and ending on line 25 with the following:

As the protection film 17 of the GaN thick film 15, use is made of the Ti film of 50nm thick and the Au film of 0.4 $\mu$ m thick in the example. However, the protection film 17 may be formed by a material and a thickness that withstand the mixed solution of phosphoric acid and sulfuric acid. In the illustrated example, the SiO<sub>2</sub> film 16 underlies the protection film Ti-Au in order to avoid metallic contamination at a portion adjacent to the surface of the GaN thick film 15. However, the SiO<sub>2</sub> film 16 may not be placed on the GaN thick film 15.

02- As a material of the protection film 17 placed over the GaN thick film 15, is used Pt, Ti-Pt-Au, Ti-Pt, Au, Ni-Au, Al-Au, AuZn, AuGe, or the like, instead of Ti-Au. At any rate, the protection film 17 may be formed by the material against the etchant of phosphoric acid and sulfuric acid.

In the above-mentioned example, the GaN buffer layer 12 and the GaN thick film 15 are deposited on the sapphire substrate 11. However they are replaced by In<sub>x</sub>Ga<sub>1-x</sub>N (0 $\leq$  x  $\leq$  1), Al<sub>x</sub>Ga<sub>1-x</sub>N (0 $\leq$  x  $\leq$  1), and Al<sub>x</sub>In<sub>y</sub>Ga<sub>1-x-y</sub>N (0 $\leq$  x + y  $\leq$  1) or a lamina structure of them. In this event, an impurity of an n-type or a p-type may be added to each layer or film.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel Claims 1-9 without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 10-14 as follows:

10. (Amended) A method as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the nitrogen-based semiconductor layer includes either In<sub>x</sub>Ga<sub>1-x</sub>N (0 $\leq$  x  $\leq$  1) or Al<sub>x</sub>Ga<sub>1-x</sub>N (0 $\leq$  x  $\leq$  1) .